

budget has been to increase the portion of each major agency's budget that goes into basic research and development. This is carried out not only within government in laboratories and so forth but with direct grants to colleges and universities, in addition to that, in some appropriate ways, to encourage business through government sharing of costs to improve research and development.

I would say that the countries that have maintained a high commitment to research and development have a tendency to have much higher productivity. I think we might be suffering in 1978 because 15 years ago, there was a lessening in research and development commitment among business.

One reason, of course, is the extreme incentive that permeated the American scientific and technological industries with the space program, when during the sixties, we had a major thrust there. And this permeated the whole structure of our economy, not only in electronics, computers, but also in health care and other factors.

So, I'd say research and development is a very fruitful investment. And we're trying to turn that trend around.

We have an opportunity in some areas to do this again. I don't mean to put another man on Mars instead of the Moon, but in the energy field, for instance. And we are exploring now how we can have a composite, focused R&D program to alleviate our energy shortage and to make us more self-sufficient. But that, in itself, would stimulate our whole economy, would give a spirit of adventure and entrepreneurship to leaders in business and the professions and, I think, would pay rich dividends in the future in the rate of increase of our own productivity.

We've got a stable country. We've got a very strong country. And although we sometimes tend to emphasize, through the

news media and through the statements of farmers like myself, through statements that come out of Wall Street or major corporations, the temporary aberrations or the temporary disappointments or the temporary statistics that show a negative factor, in general, ours is still the strongest nation on Earth, the best nation on Earth.

We're blessed with natural resources that many others don't have. And our system of government, I think, is obviously the best in the world. So, we've got a lot to be thankful for, even though we do suffer on occasion from temporary setbacks that are transient in nature.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:30 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. Walter W. Wurfel is Deputy Press Secretary.

The transcript of the interview was released on August 12.

American Indian Religious Freedom

*Statement on Signing S.J. Res. 102 Into Law.
August 12, 1978*

I have signed into law S.J. Res. 102, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978. This legislation sets forth the policy of the United States to protect and preserve the inherent right of American Indian, Eskimo, Aleut, and Native Hawaiian people to believe, express, and exercise their traditional religions. In addition, it calls for a year's evaluation of the Federal agencies' policies and procedures as they affect the religious rights and cultural integrity of Native Americans.

It is a fundamental right of every American, as guaranteed by the first amendment of the Constitution, to worship as he or she pleases. This act is in no way intended to alter that guarantee or override

existing laws, but is designed to prevent Government actions that would violate these constitutional protections. In the past, Government agencies and departments have on occasion denied Native Americans access to particular sites and interfered with religious practices and customs where such use conflicted with Federal regulations. In many instances, the Federal officials responsible for the enforcement of these regulations were unaware of the nature of traditional native religious practices and, consequently, of the degree to which their agencies interfered with such practices.

This legislation seeks to remedy this situation.

I am hereby directing that the Secretary of the Interior establish a Task Force comprised of representatives of the appropriate Federal agencies. They will prepare the report to the Congress required by this resolution, in consultation with native leaders. Several agencies, including the Departments of Treasury and Interior, have already taken commendable steps to implement the intent of this resolution.

I welcome enactment of this resolution as an important action to assure religious freedom for all Americans.

NOTE: As enacted, S.J. Res. 102 is Public Law 95-341, approved August 11.

Federal Election Commission

Withdrawal of Nomination of Samuel D. Zagoria To Be a Member. August 12, 1978

President Carter today received with regret Samuel D. Zagoria's request that his nomination to the Federal Election Commission be withdrawn from the United States Senate.

The President also announced his intention to nominate Mr. Zagoria to an

appropriate high-level Government position in the near future. The President said, "Mr. Zagoria is a talented and experienced individual who can ably serve this Government in a number of important ways. I am pleased that he is still willing to serve and that he is willing to explore with us several specific possibilities."

Office of Consumer Affairs

Appointment of Esther Peterson as Director. August 12, 1978

The President today announced that he has named Esther Peterson Director of the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs. She will assume that responsibility in addition to her present position of Special Assistant to the President for Consumer Affairs.

The U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs was created in 1971. Its responsibilities, which are detailed in Executive Order No. 11583, February 24, 1971, include assisting in the development of consumer programs in Federal agencies and assuring that the interests of consumers are presented and considered in a timely matter by those agencies. The Office is housed in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

National Advisory Council on Indian Education

Appointment of Four Members. August 14, 1978

The President today announced that he will appoint four persons to be members of the National Advisory Council on Indian Education for the terms expiring September 29, 1980.